

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated December 12, 2006. Claims 20-24, 26, 27, and 30-37 are pending in the application. The Examiner rejected claims 20, 23, 24, 26, 27, and 30-33. Claims 21, 22, 34, 36, and 37 are objected to. Claims 20, 21, 27, and 33 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims is requested.

Claims 20, 23-24, 26-27, and 30-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ross (5,089,015) in view of Williamson IV et al. (6,402,780).

The Examiner objected to claim 21 and indicated that the claim would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Claim 20 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 21 where the prosthesis further comprises a reinforcement attached to the surface of one of the commissure supports, the reinforcement having apertures for insertion of the fastener.

Neither Ross nor Williamson disclose a reinforcement attached to the surface of the commissure supports, with the reinforcements having apertures for insertion of the fastener. Since neither Ross nor Williamson teach or suggest a reinforcement attached to the surface of the commissure supports, with the reinforcements having apertures for insertion of the fastener, the combined teaching of Ross and Williamson do not render Applicant's claimed invention prima facie obvious. Thus, claim 20, and the claims that depend from claim 20, should now be allowable. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 20, 23, 24, 26, 27, and 30-33 as being unpatentable over Ross in view of Williamson.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned representative if the Examiner believes it

would be useful to advance prosecution.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

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